

STATEMENT OF JAMES L. CASWELL, ADMINISTRATOR IDAHO O.S.C.

S. 1825, The Pacific Salmon Recovery Act

May 14, 2002

Madam Chairman and Honorable Members of the Oceans, Atmosphere and Fisheries Sub-committee:

It is a privilege to come before you today and offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 1825—the Pacific Salmon Recovery Act. My name is James Caswell and I serve as the Director of our Governor's Office of Species Conservation for the State of Idaho. Our Governor and your former senate colleague, Dirk Kempthorne, sends his warmest regards.

Passage of S. 1825 is of crucial importance to the State of Idaho. Its passage will allow Idaho to help the federal government fill its responsibility. That importance is reflected by the original co-sponsorship of this bill by our senators, Larry Craig and Mike Crapo. I wish to thank them for their efforts.

Past Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund allocations have largely overlooked Idaho despite the important role Idaho's anadromous stocks play in the overall recovery of Pacific Salmon. All of Idaho's native anadromous stocks are listed under the federal Endangered Species Act as either threatened or endangered. Though they spawn and are reared far from the shores of the Pacific Ocean, some Idaho stocks travel in excess of 1000 miles to reach and return from the Pacific Ocean, these majestic fish call the same Pacific Ocean home for a portion of their life cycle.

I have traveled here to stress Idaho's support for S. 1825. From an Idaho perspective the greatest good resulting from passage of this bill would be the formalized recognition of Idaho's place in assisting the federal government in meeting its responsibilities by dedicating a portion of future Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund distributions to Idaho.

The salmon crisis in the Pacific Northwest cannot be resolved without restoring Idaho's anadromous stocks

- Four of the eleven (36%) listed Evolutionary Significant Units (ESUs) in the Columbia River originate in the Snake River Basin: Snake River Sockeye, Snake River Spring/Summer Chinook, Snake River Fall Chinook, Snake River Steelhead.
- Anadromous stocks from Idaho are the backbone of the Columbia River run.
- Idaho produces the largest components of the spring/summer Chinook and steelhead run.

Failure to restore anadromous runs in Idaho will prevent fisherman in the Pacific Northwest, California, and Alaska from being able to access healthy runs.

- The ESA has placed onerous constraints on fisherman to reduce harvest, at great expense to fishing families and communities.
- Idaho's salmon are mixed with stocks from other areas in traditional fishing

areas. If runs from Washington and Oregon are restored, but those in Idaho are not, fisheries from Southeast Alaska to California will continue to be constrained.

Idaho has sufficient spawning and rearing habitat to support restored runs of spring and summer chinook, sockeye and steelhead.

- Idaho has 3,700 miles of habitat accessible to salmon and steelhead, which represents enormous production potential.
- The remaining key spawning and rearing habitat for the Snake River Fall Chinook is found mostly in Idaho or in the Snake River bordering Idaho.
- Idaho streams comprise the largest percentage of habitat and produce the bulk of wild spring and summer Chinook and summer steelhead in the Columbia River Basin.
- The Snake River retains the potential to produce 63% of natural-origin summer steelhead in the Columbia River Basin.

The threatened status of Snake River fall chinook has constrained Pacific Salmon Treaty and other coastal fisheries stretching from California to Alaska. Idaho hopes that our inclusion in future allocations of the PCSRF will help reverse these declines which have cost the coastal states millions of dollars in lost revenue and jobs. The decline of spring/summer and fall Chinook salmon and steelhead in Idaho greatly constrains fisheries not just in Idaho, but Pacific coastal and Columbia River fisheries.

That Idaho is a worthy recipient of PCSRF monies is a viewpoint not confined to the borders of the Gem State. I would like to draw your attention to a letter from Theodore W. Kassinger, General Counsel of the Department of Commerce, wherein he states “In particular, we (the Department of Commerce) support the expansion of this funding (Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Funds) to Idaho. As you know, many watersheds within Idaho contain some of the best salmon habitat in the Columbia River Basin. Support for the Pacific salmon recovery should be comprehensive and focused on opportunities to provide the greatest benefits to recovery of wild salmon populations” The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Commission echoes these comments in stating: “The Columbia River tribes continue to support expanding the program to explicitly include the State of Idaho’s salmon restoration efforts.” If Pacific salmon recovery is to be effective, its focus and the resources committed to these efforts must be spread out across the region.

When the Pacific Northwest Governors affiliated with the Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Act and the Northwest Power Planning Council choose to address salmon recovery they did so on a regional basis; the result was the Four Governors’ Recommendations on Salmon Recovery. This was the first time that the states of Idaho, Washington, Oregon and Montana had come together on a common approach that acknowledged that the only way to progress on real recovery is with a partnership between the states and federal government. They acted in this manner because they knew no single state can solve the problem and as stated by Jim Connaughton, Chair of the

Council of Environmental Quality, “When you speak as a region, you have our undivided attention”. This partnership is accomplishing more in a way that honors the roles of the individual states and tribes while promoting local planning for full salmon life-cycle restoration. The region has a plan upon which we all agree. This Four Governors plan can work in concert with the 2000 Federal Columbia River Power System biological opinion. The key is to now fully implement the federal biological opinion. With this spirit of cooperation among states and in partnership with the Federal government, we are asking that Idaho be included in future allocations of the Pacific Salmon Coastal Recovery Fund. Let me be clear, any improvement in Idaho’s listed anadromous stocks benefits all of our states that are committed to salmon recovery in the Pacific Northwest.

Having mentioned our support for S. 1825, I’d like to take a moment and point out a few ways in which the act might be improved. As an administrator tasked with conserving threatened and endangered species, I appreciate the enormous financial resources committed to the restoration of these species. I am sensitive to your desires to ascertain that the monies you authorize and appropriate are spent in a most efficient manner and that the states and tribes are held accountable for their actions. It is in that vein that I suggest that some of the processes required by this bill are duplicative of processes and safeguards already in place throughout much of the Pacific Northwest. Sec. 3(h)(1) asks that each eligible state and tribe “carefully coordinate the salmon conservation activities of that State or tribal government to eliminate duplicative and overlapping activities” yet passage as written would in fact cause duplicative and overlapping activities. For

example, under the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act, the states of Idaho, Washington and Oregon and the tribes therein, already have an established, thorough scientific peer review program—the Independent Scientific Review Board. Suppose the State of Idaho determined to reconnect a once productive riparian area to currently existing habitat and determined to use both NWPPC Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program monies and PCSRF monies to complete the project. As the act is now written this project would have to be endorsed by both a local sub-basin planning working group and some form of a citizen advisory committee, presented in two separate annual planning documents and then be presented initially to two scientific review panels with subsequent responses to address concerns raised by both review panels before one shovel of dirt could be turned. The accounting and follow up reporting would proceed down two separate tracks as well for the life of the project. Following that partial and yet lengthy example of the potential quagmire that awaits state and local conservation officers I would simply suggest that the committee amend the bill to allow existing processes in the region to fulfill the act's intent where and when they already exist. I can assure the committee that Idaho already has in place processes that meet the act's desire for annual plans, peer review and public participation.

Let me close by saying that Idaho appreciates the recognition granted in S. 1825 as to the important role our anadromous stocks play in the region's salmon recovery efforts. We have both dedicated biologists and concerned property owners who anxiously await PCSRF funds so that we can advance efforts which will pay dividends from Alaska to California. We ask that

processes in place be granted deference so that precious time and resources are not lost in duplicative efforts. Thank you for your time and attention.